

Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

courage is contagious

Viewing cable 09SANJOSE448, COSTA RICA AND CUBA: A SNAPSHOT OF RELATIONS FOR

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09SANJOSE448**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09SANJOSE448	2009-05-29 20:29	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy San Jose

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-03-11/Investigacion/NotasDestacadas/Investigacion2710281.aspx>

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-03-11/Investigacion/NotaPrincipal/Investigacion2710282.aspx>

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSJ #0448/01 1492029
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 292029Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0888
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0060

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 000448

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CEN; WHA/CCA AND USOAS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/19/2019

TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [CS](#)

SUBJECT: COSTA RICA AND CUBA: A SNAPSHOT OF RELATIONS FOR
THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. SECSTATE 48487

[1](#)B. SAN JOSE 225

[1](#)C. SAN JOSE 18

[1](#)D. 08 SAN JOSE 1000

Classified By: DCM Peter Brennan for reasons 1.4 (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Costa Rica's March 18 re-establishment of full diplomatic relations with Cuba (Ref B) has made little impact thus far. In Costa Rica, the news generated more questions than kudos to President Oscar Arias. In Cuba, the Castro government hardly noticed. The GOCR has yet to designate an Ambassador to Cuba, officially convert its Consulate in Havana into an Embassy, or send a high-level delegation to the island to discuss the "new relationship", but we understand that discussions have begun about an MoU which would set the framework. The upgraded relationship may temper Costa Rica's public criticism of Cuba, but any bilateral thaw will be slow: the two countries and systems of government are simply too different to move quickly. Costa Rica likely will seek an intermediary role on some Cuba-related multilateral issues, such as the mechanics and timing of Cuba's return to the OAS, but we anticipate no sudden, drastic changes in the bilateral ties between San Jose and Havana. Suspending Title III of the Libertad Act in regard to Costa Rica thus remains in the U.S. national interest, especially as we encourage the GOCR to use its upgraded ties for Arias' stated intent: to establish a "direct and open dialogue" which could positively influence the Castro regime. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) The following answers are keyed to Ref A questions:

-- Costa Rica has traditionally been a strong critic of the Cuban government. The recent re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Costa Rica and Cuba has brought with it a lull in outspoken calls for democratic development in Cuba, as the GOCR has yet to use its new relationship to promote the promised "dialogue" on democratic change with Cuba.

-- Costa Rica has not made official statements condemning the Cuban government in the past six months.

-- There have been no high-level diplomatic visits between Costa Rica and Cuba in the last six months. Costa Rica maintains a consulate in Miramar, Cuba, and Cuba maintains a consulate in San Jose. However, FonMin Bruno Stagno told an academic audience on May 28 that he and his Cuban counterpart, Bruno Rodriguez, had begun discussions about a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding on the margins of the May 14 Rio Group-EU meeting in Prague.

-- Post is not aware of any major Costa Rican business investments in Cuba. However, a number of Costa Rican businesses import cigars from Cuba and repackage them. In addition, Costa Rican tourists regularly visit Cuba and vice versa.

-- Post is not aware of any bilateral trade agreements between Costa Rica and Cuba.

-- Post is not aware of any significant exchange programs between Costa Rica and Cuba. A limited number of Costa Rican students have accepted scholarships to study medicine and film in Cuba, but we are not aware of any formal exchange or scholarship programs between Cuban and Costa Rican universities.

-- We have no information on the number of Costa Ricans who may have traveled to Cuba for medical treatment, but we expect that number is small, given the availability of government-subsidized health care in Costa Rica. We estimate that there may be a few hundred Cuban doctors working in Costa Rica, either in private practices or with Costa Rican hospitals. Many of these doctors fled Cuba for greater political and economic freedom in Costa Rica, and eventually naturalize as Costa Rican citizens.

COMMENT

13. (C) After a protracted period hinting at change (Refs C-F), the GOCR's announcement of re-establishing full diplomatic relations landed with a thud. Arias seemed surprised at the skeptical media reaction at the time, which raised questions on human rights, and disappointed that this

third "grand" foreign policy gesture had such little domestic or international impact. (Arias, other "big" foreign policy steps were to move the Embassy in Israel from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv in 2006 and to recognize China in 2007.) Since announcing full relations in March, the Arias administration has reiterated that Costa Rica will be able to exercise positive influence on Cuba. Stagno made the same point to his audience on May 28. We should urge the GOCR to really do so.
BRENNAN